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ABSTRACT

Education is a key element in Zambia's national development; distance education is particularly suitable as a means of human resource development. The main purposes of distance education are to provide education for the unserved, predominantly rural indigenous population; provide second-chance education for dropouts; raise the educational level of teachers and the general population; provide opportunity to gain qualifications; and improve community health and agriculture. Distance education agencies that have shown considerable determination and dedication to providing educational service are the National Correspondence College, Department of Correspondence Studies at the University of Zambia, and Education Broadcasting Services. The potential of distance education to contribute to the solution of social, economic, and educational problems has been recognized and picked up so enthusiastically that efforts have become diffuse and resources spread too thinly. Successful distance education requires material development, standards, government support, and coordination and mutual support. Three possible ways to assist Zambian distance education are to assist individual institutions only, to assist the government in establishing a nationally integrated distance teaching infrastructure, and to coordinate distance teaching agencies. (31 references) (YLB)

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THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING

DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

A Report on a Consultancy by
Ormond Tate
Director
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1991

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TERMS OF REFERENCE

1 Evaluate the current operation of the various distance teaching units or centres against the background of the country's priorities in respect of human resources development needs.

2 Examine the desirability and feasibility of having a nationally integrated distance teaching infrastructure.

3 Undertake an assessment of the needs of such a system, manpower and equipment, etc to ensure its effectiveness as an instrument for addressing the demands for education/training at a distance.

4 On a basis of the above and in consultation with relevant Zambian officials prepare a project outline for consideration by the Commonwealth of Learning.

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and three open secondary study groups

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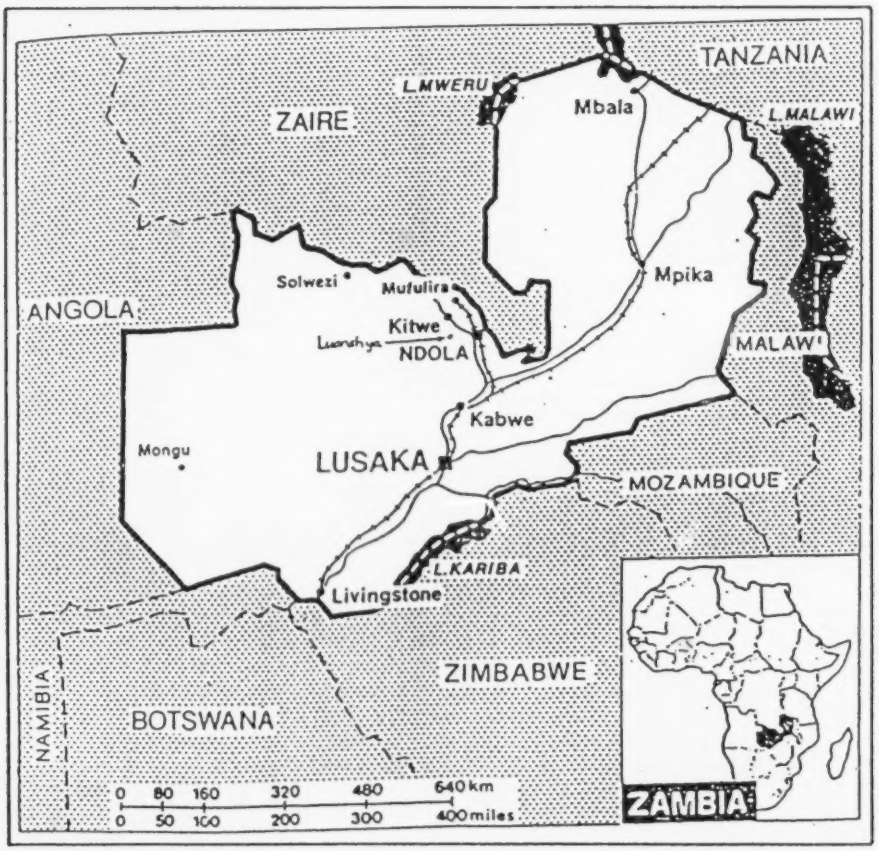
DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

1 ZAMBIA : POPULATION, EMPLOYMENT, ECONOMY

The state of distance education in Zambia cannot be appreciated without at least briefly considering population, economy, employment , education, and national development aims. In the 26 years since independence in 1964 education has been seen as a key element in national development from colonial territory to an independent, self-governing and self-administrating country.



Zambia, formerly Northern Rhodesia, is a landlocked south-central African country bordered to the north by Zaire and Tanzania, to the east by Malawi and Mozambique, to the south by Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, and to the west by Angola. Like Zambia

most of these countries have developed distance education agencies teaching courses using English as the medium of instruction.

About 35% of the Zambia 's population, which is estimated at 8 million, live in urban settings. The capital Lusaka, a sprawling city, has a population of over 800,000. The population has been for several years, and still is, increasing at 3.7% per year. Life expectancy has increased from 36 for both sexes in 1950-5 to 55 for females and 52 for males in 1988. Despite this the population is youthful and over half are under 15 years of age. Females entering reproductive age far exceed those moving out, so the past and present pressure on education, health, food, employment and housing will continue and become greater.
The pressures may be exacerbated by improved health and hygiene and for as long as the average number of children that a Zambian woman is likely to bear in her lifetime remains at approximately 7.2.

In 1980 about 12% of people in the potentially economically active age were unemployed and 37% economically inactive. Females constituted about two-thirds of both unemployed and economically inactive.

Zambia's external finances have deteriorated as a result of

- falling copper prices for over 20 years
- increasing oil prices up to 1981
- years of confrontation across the Zambesi as a front-line southern African state and headquarters of the African National Congress
- fast growing population
- difficulties of reaching agreement about policies for dealing with balance of payments problems
- high inflation rate.

Zambia has set objectives and targets for national development in a series of National Development Plans but many of the policies and programmes, particularly during the period 1981-1987 could not be implemented. The net effect of this was a "general decline in real economic growth which together with a steadily increasing population, resulted in a corresponding decline in per capita incomes, worsening levels of poverty, and growing socio-economic and regional disparities."

Role of Education in National Development

The Fourth National Development Plan continues to stress the need for Zambia to grow from its own resources so development strategies are designed to take account of

- "current under utilisation of productive capacity in productive sectors
- the strong technological dependence that undermines efforts at increasing utilisation of local raw materials, and
- the stress that has been exerted on social infrastructures particularly in the health and education sectors."[1]

To this end there is a need to provide foreign exchange for manufacturers to import raw materials, encourage the development of technology to make greater use of local raw materials, and allocate more resources to relieve pressures on housing, health and education.

Education is seen as playing a large part in achieving the objectives and targets of the Fourth National Development Plan. In particular the objectives which relate to creating a self-reliant and self-sustaining economy, reducing the current high rate of growth of the nation's population, increasing formal sector employment, reducing the existing socio-economic and regional disparities and improving living standards in rural areas, the development of agriculture, greater youth participation in national development, creating a strong local scientific and technological base, increasing participation of women in national socio-economic development and removing inertia from the Public Service in order to speed up the implementation of development programmes, are all likely to be dependent in some way on progress in implementing education policies effectively.

1 *Fourth National Development Plan Chapter III Objectives Targets and Strategy of the Fourth National Development Plan 3.1 Growth from own resources page 29.*

2 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In pre-independence Zambia educational provisions for indigenous people were grossly inadequate. The education system was colonial in curriculum and administration and there were only 387,417 primary and 13,853 secondary enrolments in 1964. Massive expansion resulted from implemented government policies and priorities. since independence. Zambia is allocating an increasing proportion of its GNP to education.

The structure of the educational system in Zambia today is similar to that shown in the diagram.

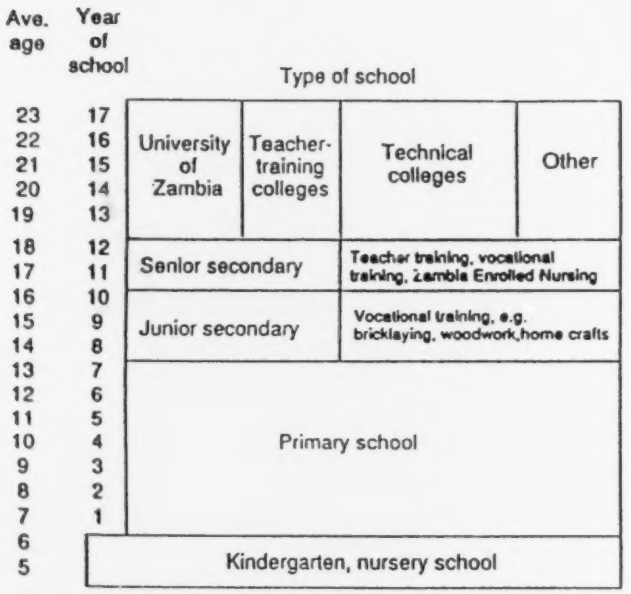


Figure 1
Structure of the education system

Structure of the Education System

"The United National Independence Party and its Government attaches great importance to education because of its central role in national development as a source of educated manpower needed for national development in all areas of human endeavour. In Zambia, education is run by two ministries, namely: Ministry of General Education, Youth and Sport and Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology.

The Ministry of General Education, Youth and Sport is responsible for preschool, primary and secondary education, training for school leavers and promotion of sport. In addition, the ministry is responsible for Continuing Education, Educational Broadcasting Services, Curriculum Development Centre and Kenneth Kaunda Foundation. The latter is a parastatal body responsible for production and distribution of school materials. The Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology is responsible for Teachers' Colleges, Trades Training Institutes, Technical Colleges and registration of private institutes offering training of a technical and vocational nature. Besides, the ministry has responsibility for policy issues for the National Council for Scientific Research, the Examination Council of Zambia and two universities."

Primary Education

Great strides have been made since independence in universalising primary education in Zambia, as shown by the following table.

Enrolments in Government Aided Schools		
Primary	1984	1988
Grade 1	205,606	222,858
Grade 5	161,606	187,514
Primary Grades 1 to 7	1,277,131	1,409,848
Progression Grade 4 to 7	91.2%	92.7%

Government statistics quoted in the Fourth National Development Plan show that the planned goal of enabling all seven year old children to enrol in grade 1 was not attained by 1988, as there was a shortfall of 15,000 places. The number of seven year olds not in grade 1 was even larger than this because of the reported large number of under-aged and over-aged children in grade 1. The shortage of grade 1 places was critical in the larger cities of Lusaka, Kitwe and Ndola where there was room in grade 1 for only about two-thirds of the seven year old children wishing to attend even if all places at this level were reserved for this age group.

These problems of availability of places and progression rates through primary schools in larger urban areas persist at higher primary grades.

Despite the evident considerable achievement the Zambian government has made in primary education, problems identified were:

- lack of capital investment, insufficient additional school buildings, inability to repair and/or replace buildings.
- lack of sufficient teachers
- too many inadequately educated and poorly trained teachers

The growing population means these problems will persist for some years.

Secondary Education

There are examinations at the end of primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels. The extent of 'dropouts', or what President Kuanda, in 1973, called 'squeeze outs' is shown by the tables.

Enrolments in Government and Aided Secondary Schools by Grade

Grade	Enrolment 1984	Percentage of Grade 1	Enrolment 1988	Percentage of Grade 1	Percentage Increase Over 1984
Junior Secondary					
Grade 8	35,098	17%	46,781	20%	33.3
Grade 9	32,582		50,328		54.5
Grade 10	31,406	15%			-
Total	99,087		97,109		-2.0
Senior Secondary					
Grade 10	-		16,000	7%	
Grade 11	13,471	6%	16,394		17.7
Grade 12	13,252		15,603		21.8
Total	26,724		47,999		79.6
Total	125,811		144,108		14.5

Secondary education, despite marked achievement, presents a mixed picture. Here, also, considerable progress has been made. Increase in total places has kept up with population growth. The effects of the changed division between junior and senior secondary have by now almost been overcome and there are increasing grade 8 to grade 12 persistence rates (44% from 1984-8).

Pressure for places will continue with similar problems to those identified above for primary education: school buildings, quantity and quality of teachers.

The clear 'squeeze-out' points are at the end of primary school and the transition from junior secondary to senior secondary school. In Zambia, as a developing country, there are needs for, and pressures for, increased and improved educational opportunity at many levels. The greatest

unsatisfied demand for education and training in Zambia appears to be among secondary age students.

Tertiary Education

At the tertiary level there are universities, teacher training colleges, technical colleges and other institutions such as The Co-operative College, not under the control of the two Ministries of Education.

At tertiary level there was a drop of 21% in the number of students enrolled in technical education institutions between 1984 to 1988. Staff development programmes aimed at Zambianising teaching and supervisory staff have progressed well but overall 30% of the teaching positions in specialised disciplines have remained vacant for some years.

TABLE XIX.4 DTEVT ENROLMENT AND OUTPUT BY PROGRAMME 1979-88

Training Programmes	*E O*	*1979*	*1980*	*1981*	*1982*	*1983*	*1984*	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*Total*
Trades or Crafts	E	1 459	1 486	1 453	1 720	1 579	1 532	1 446	1 658	1 030	864	14 227
	O	649	463	477	503	614	661	403	609	589	515	5 483
Technician/Technologist	E	1 078	1 141	1 040	1 076	1 101	832	1 012	442	1 045	982	9 749
	O	312	229	248	185	238	337	401	149	412	346	2 857
Science and Paramedical	E	308	328	276	293	253	272	235	257	210	236	2 668
	O	88	65	46	81	67	113	99	70	53	50	732
Business Studies	E	363	462	554	619	740	640	393	308	625	711	5 415
	O	110	62	40	102	97	199	302	84	63	127	1 168
Secretarial	E	1 027	953	988	84	803	671	854	946	456	482	8 021
	O	491	310	451	363	360	248	198	447	137	309	3 314
Air Services	E	119	95	238	172	124	120	126	61	56	–	1 111
	O	90	93	109	117	80	76	68	115	–	–	748
Applied Arts	E	288	245	266	220	188	197	109	317	179	211	2 220
	O	81	59	112	163	71	79	24	91	84	106	870
Teacher Training	E	381	392	403	367	254	364	230	270	330	401	3 392
	O	141	222	122	128	152	88	87	148	51	232	1 371
Nkumbi International College (Secondary School) Enrolment Grades 8 to 12	E	239	236	269	286	249	282	300	308	299	294	2 761
TOTAL	E	5 261	5 338	5 487	5 594	5 291	4 910	4 705	4 567	4 230	4 181	49 564
	O	1 992	1 531	1 638	1 674	1 707	1 823	1 589	1 598	1 405	1 700	16 796

Source –National Commission for Development Planning O–Output E–Enrolment

Enrolments and outputs of teachers colleges varied between 1979 and 1988 but did not show an overall increasing trend. However, between these years the numbers of students in primary and secondary schools increased by 151,014, while 10,128 new teachers emerged from teachers college, ie approximately 1 extra teacher for every 15 extra students. Without knowing teacher loss rates per year it still appears as though the number of teachers in schools may be increasing and the student/teacher ratios which cause concern, may be improving.

Table XIX.6 - Teacher Training Colleges - Enrolment and Output, 1979-1988

Year	Enrolment	Output
1979	4 406	2 478
1980	4 445	2 194
1981	4 485	2 237
1982	3 843	2 273
1983	4 304	1 849
1984	4 653	1 866
1985†	4 549	3 798
1986	4 545	2 189
1987	4 164	1 929
1988*	4 605	2 212

Source - NCDP

† There were two outputs due to change of calendar.

* Provisional figures

University enrolments grew steadily up to 1985-6 but have declined since. Approximately half the enrolments are in education and humanities and social sciences.

TABLE XIX.7 –COPPERBELT UNIVERSITY–ENROLMENT 1979-80 – 1987-88

School	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Business and Industrial Studies	360	378	421	443	395	399	369	327	337
Environmental Studies	–	–	27	70	100	129	156	143	142
TOTAL	360	378	448	513	495	528	525	470	479

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA –ENROLMENT 1979-80 – 1987-88

School	*1979-80*	*1980-81*	*1981-82*	*1982-83*	*1983-84*	*1984-85*	*1985-86*	*1986-87*	*1987-88*
Agriculture	119	171	216	216	245	229	223	258	258
Engineering	227	238	281	278	319	300	356	338	338
Medicine	194	168	211	223	256	255	269	247	247
Natural Sciences	551	–	615	666	618	626	710	550	479
Veterinary Medicine	–	–	–	14	32	51	72	83	20
School of Mines	164	160	156	203	180	164	204	134	134
School of Law	145	147	132	113	104	98	117	118	119
School of Education	772	759	666	670	735	752	811	831	744
School of Humanities & Social Sciences	798	757	631	578	599	672	684	789	911
TOTAL	2 970	2 400	2 864	2 961	3 088	3 183	3 446	3 348	3 250

Total enrolments in tertiary education (technical and vocational, teachers colleges and universities) in 1988 were approximately 10,100. Data was not available nor was there time to investigate the destinations of secondary school leavers, especially at senior levels, but it seems as though a good proportion have access to places in tertiary institutions. There was not time either, to investigate the discrepancies between entry and output numbers reported in some sectors at tertiary level.

Summary

The major factors affecting education are:

1 population growth resulting in continually increasing numbers of students
2 lack of finance affecting provision of buildings and equipment
3 lack of teachers, tutors and lecturers
4 desire to extend, expand and improve education.

To sum up, particular concerns expressed in the FNDP, by educationalists interviewed, personal observation and in articles about Zambian education, are:

- placing primary school and junior secondary school leavers in higher school grades
- illiterate adults
- unemployment
- lack of mathematics, science and commerce education
- lack of sufficient practical vocational and technical education
- supplying and maintaining enough teachers
- insufficient teachers
- inadequately trained teachers
- poor pay for teachers and tertiary tutors and consequent drain to neighbouring countries like Botswana
- lack of money for equipment, maintenance and basic supplies
- lack of sufficient buildings, furniture and equipment
- continuing population growth
- urban growth; some educational opportunities are worse in town and city schools
- assessment and evaluation of student and teacher performance
- establishing and maintaining efficient systems[1]
- administration and monitoring standards
- difficulties of communication and co-ordination between the two Ministries of Education.

1

The government and Ministries appear to be well aware of most of these problems as can be seen from the Fourth National Development Plan.

Commenting on the state of the education sector at the end of 1988 the FNDP commented: "The quality of education during the period under review declined due to finance and other constraints, such as excessively large classes, poorly furnished classrooms, dilapidated buildings, scarcity of textbooks, science equipment and other essential items. A combination of these factors together with accommodation problems led to a fall in teacher morale ... During the same period minimum expansion took place at the primary, junior secondary and university levels, while enrolments in other sub-sectors remained stagnant or even declined." [2]

Some concerns stated as objectives of the current Fourth National Development Plan are to:

- ensure improved performance of all educational institutions
- provide preschool education through community efforts
- provide more widespread and equitable educational opportunities at the basic level and give priority to expansion of primary education
- widen access to primary and secondary education through distance education, night schools and part-time courses
- ensure carefully controlled expansion at other levels
- enhance the training and research capacities at tertiary level
- consolidate and extend the teaching of population education to all educational institutions, and train teachers for this purpose
- strengthen and enlarge the financial resource base for educational provision especially in the field of mathematics, science and technology
- monitor adherence to standardised chargeable fees by all private education institutions

The major government thrusts for education development are threefold. There will be consolidation of existing facilities with provision of limited additional facilities for specially targeted groups while focusing on maintaining progress towards the provision of universal primary education (that is, for grades 1 to 7) but with some additional provision for grades 8 and 9. At teacher education level, facilities will be expanded to the extent needed by these demands. It is envisaged that there will only be modest expansion at technical education and university levels.

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2 *Fourth National Development Plan Chapter XIX Education 2.0 Objectives of the TNDP page 298*

The overall educational objectives of the Fourth National Development Plan will be implemented by the adoption of three major strategies:

- qualitative strategy
- quantitative strategy
- cost-effective strategy.

Distance education is particularly suitable as a means of implementing these three strategies and pursuing the three government thrusts in addressing some of the educational problems identified. How the existing distance education agencies in Zambia can be used as a basis to do this will be discussed later.

3 DISTANCE EDUCATION IN ZAMBIA

Distance education agencies in Zambia are administered by several ministries and private organisations.

- **Ministry of General Education, Youth & Sport** is responsible for the National Correspondence College, and the Educational Broadcasting Service.
- **Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology**
  University of Zambia: Centre for Continuing Education, Department of Correspondence Studies.
- **Ministry of Agriculture & Co-operatives** produce broadcasts, pamphlets, resources.
- **Private Correspondence Schools,** both Zambian and overseas, provide bible and church courses, others teach commercial, technical and vocational courses.

Aims of Distance Education

Distance education was seen originally as a way of providing education for the predominantly rural indigenous population whose needs had been largely ignored prior to independence

- cutting across geographical barriers and so equalising education opportunities
- providing instruction at all levels.

While there appeared to be no defined role, policy or objectives for distance education as a means of delivering education or as an element of educational strategy in the third or fourth national development plans, some individual distance education institutions are mentioned in these plans and specific goals set for them.

The main purposes of distance education seem to include those purposes originally envisaged, and in addition to:

- provide second-chance education for the dropouts of the education system
- prevent social dissatisfaction
- raise the educational level of public servants and teachers
- raise the educational level of the general population
- provide opportunities for re-entry into the normal face-to-face education system
- provide opportunity to gain qualifications
- allow people to learn while they work, saving them, their employers and the government money
- provide a relatively inexpensive form of education

- overcome shortage of trained teachers
- raise the level of local administration
- support co-operatives
- improve community standards in hygiene, health, nutrition
- raise the basic standard of the agriculture which has assumed greater economic importance.

Students from distance education institutions are expected to sit the same examinations as everyone else, but the perceived 'unsatisfactory nature' of the distance mode is emphasised by the fact that to qualify for certification in many courses at a tertiary level students must complete a face-to-face component as well.

NATIONAL CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE

The National Correspondence College of the Ministry of Education and Culture was established in 1964 immediately after independence, when the United National Independence Party embarked on a massive and rapid expansion of the formal school system.

Enrolments for primary, secondary and technical education rose so rapidly that the conventional face-to-face education system could not cope with the increase. Distance education was seen as a cost-effective alternative which could equalise educational opportunity, carry education to remote rural areas and give more students access to the educational expertise of the limited number of trained, qualified teachers available.

Aim

The original aim of the National Correspondence College was to offer secondary education to:

- teachers with professional training but lacking the required academic qualifications in school subjects
- adults wanting to pursue academic qualifications leading to certification which would give access to employment opportunities
- primary school leavers who could not gain a place in the formal secondary school system

The National Correspondence College is the oldest, the largest and performs probably the most socially and politically sensitive role of the three main distance education agencies seen in Zambia.

By 1972 the educational needs of primary school leavers had become so great because of the difference between demand and available places that the Ministry of Education decided that the National Correspondence College should cater specifically for young grade 7 (primary) leavers through what became known as the Supervised Study Group Scheme and later as the Open Secondary Class System.

As only 20% of students completing primary education can enter secondary schools the National Correspondence College plays a major role in the Zambian secondary education system.

Location

The National Correspondence College is sited in the small town of Luanshya in the Zambia 'Copper Belt', one of the most densely populated parts of Zambia. Suitable buildings were available in Luanshya and though the original intention was that the college should be relocated to Lusaka, at a later date, this move has not eventuated.

Funding

Finance is from the government for the students enrolled in the open secondary classes and from fees paid to the government by adult students.

The Students

Current enrolments were reported to be about 30,000 but records kept did not provide clear data on total enrolment for any one year. This is approximately 20% of the total secondary enrolments and again illustrates the importance of the National Correspondence College in providing secondary education in Zambia. Enrolment appears to have decreased from a maximum of 33,000 about three years ago. There are two main categories of students:

- **directly enrolled** adult students studying either junior, secondary or GCE 'O' levels courses. There are 19,000 directly enrolled students, the majority are male and most are employed.. 30% of the 'O' levels students are trained teachers working to upgrade their academic qualifications. 20% are adults seeking qualifications which will enable them to obtain more responsible posts in the public service. About 25% of all adult students live in rural areas.

- **open secondary class** students are those who were unable to find places in conventional secondary schools when they completed grade 7. Study through the Open Secondary Class System is free but students must apply for entry and selection is based on grades obtained in the national grade 7 examination. Cut-off points vary from region to region and are decided by local Chief Education Officers. About 11,000 students are enrolled in open secondary classes of the National Correspondence College. They study at junior secondary level (up to grade 9), though some GCE 'O' levels have been introduced at selected centres.

Study Systems

The directly enrolled students receive materials from and send written work for marking directly to the National Correspondence College.

The Open Secondary Class students are organised into supervised study groups which are assumed to average about 50 students. An untrained supervisor is responsible for the administration and student support of each study group or class. The National Correspondence College provides timetables, lessons and marks the student assignments. Initially the supervisors were not supposed to do any teaching but now that courses provide for some 'live' teaching or inputs from supervisors there is an increasing need for them to be teacher trained and to be familiar with the content and teaching style of the National Correspondence College courses.

Students in Open Secondary Classes take three years to cover standard two year junior secondary school level courses. This is because the Open Secondary Classes start one term after the schools open and the hours of attendance are shorter than a school day. Success in the Junior Secondary School (grade 9) examinations for the National Correspondence College could enable a student to obtain a place in a conventional senior secondary school class.

The Open Secondary Class System is an interesting co-operative development involving both classroom and distance education. It has the potential to provide student support and group interaction and learning opportunities, and build on the strong social cultural elements.

Courses and Teaching Style

National Correspondence College courses tend to be traditional, academic in style, and run parallel with those offered by secondary schools. Subject areas are English, mathematics, geography, history, civics, religious education, commerce, accounting, science for Zambia junior secondary courses, and the GCE 'O' levels and Zambia School Certificate prescriptions. The National Correspondence College exchanges course materials with Botswana Extension College and the Namibian Extension Unit.

Recent course developments have been mainly in commerce and science and there are proposals for new courses to be offered in junior book-keeping, human biology and environmental science, and a certificate in accounts and business studies.

Lessons are designed to be interactive with self-marked practice exercises and teacher marked assignments for assessment. Though turnaround time for work marked by part-time tutors is only one to two weeks, the mail system to and from students is slow, so worksheets and self-mark exercises with model answers provide immediate feedback.

Random sampling of marking done by all tutors and supervisors is used to maintain standards, provide feedback on course content, and as a basis for in-service training of tutors.

Problems and Trends

The impressions gained from staff at the National Correspondence College, and at the Ministry of General Education, Youth and Sport, were that all were committed and working hard in very difficult circumstances, largely beyond their control, to maintain the services of the National Correspondence College. They were all aware of problems, constraints and lack of resources, and there was a good degree of unanimity in the issues they identified, which in turn were consistent with points made in articles such as those by

Dr Siaciwena. These comments are not meant as criticisms of people or institutions, but are implicit in the nature of the task to evaluate the current operation of the various distance teaching units in Zambia. The co-operation between the Zambian Ministries of Education and the Commonwealth of Learning is an acknowledgement that there are difficulties, that there may be ways of improving the situation and that some help may be necessary.

Problems and issues identified were:

1 Basic problems with production of teaching and study materials:
- insufficient capacity for printing assignments, and problems in keeping the unreliable printing machine functioning
- shortages of printing chemicals for the offset printing machine
- shortages of paper, and the expense of buying paper
- lack of materials to keep electric typewriters operating.

2 Shortages of teaching materials for students, particularly in Open Secondary Classes. In the three classes visited the supervisor appeared to have the only set of student lessons for over 120 students.

3 Shortage of materials such as protractors, set squares, graph paper, science materials.

4 Shortage of radios and difficulties keeping radios operating for Open Secondary Classes to receive programmes from the Educational Broadcasting Service designed to complement National Correspondence College lessons.

5 Insufficient finance to keep the college operating at anything above a critical level. The National Correspondence College annual budget was reported to be approximately 40% of that necessary to keep the college operating at a basic level, and only one-quarter of that needed for it to operate effectively and fulfil the role expected of it. Staff who although they are managing to keep the college operating under considerable difficulties are becoming discouraged and beleaguered by the increasing problems they face and their inability to see any solutions.

6 The cost of distributing student learning materials by post.

7 Costly transport of materials to and from the College at Luanshya

8 Class sizes for Open Secondary Classes are large, and now that more face-to-face supplementary teaching is expected of supervisors the lack of training, coupled with the current lack of student materials, will downgrade the effectiveness and public perception of Open Secondary Classes, of the National Correspondence College and of distance education in Zambia.

9 Lack of qualified staff, and inadequate facilities for producing and printing lessons make it difficult to expand the range of courses available to meet educational priorities and to revise lessons to meet curriculum changes necessary for human resources and economic development.

10 Need for staff training in distance education - planning and writing courses and teaching at a distance.

11 Cumbersome administration, lack of systems and monitoring procedures to ensure the systems work efficiently, and to alert the administration to potential difficulties early, in a materials production system, mean that the best is not being got from the meagre resources available.

12 Separation of the National Correspondence College from the Ministry at Luanshya. The Ministry was clearly aware of the situation at the National Correspondence College, communicated with and received regular reports from the principal. There was, however, a perception among staff at Luanshaya that they are isolated, their problems and the realities of their situation are not understood.

13 Costly postage, cumbersome administrative systems and lack of funding exacerbate problems caused by failure of communication technology and lack of supplies such as paper, radios and tapes. Separation from other distance education institutions isolates staff and prevents the co-ordination and co-operation which could produce economies of scale and multiple use of resources.
Falling enrolment at the National Correspondence College is at most probably related to lack of funding, shortages of resources and to the frustration and lack of success experienced by students, which derives from these problems outlined above.

The initial enthusiasm for distance education seems to have decreased among administrators, and through lack of resources, among students. This could be a 'catch 22' situation. The distance mode was probably expected to solve too many educational problems across too many different situations.

The funding, staffing and administrative systems of distance education have not been co-ordinated, so the impact has been fragmented and there is no one area in which the potential of distance education has been fully realised.

UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

Purposes

The Department of Correspondence Studies is part of the Centre for Continuing Education of the University of Zambia. It was established in 1967 as a dual mode operation, modelled on the University of New England, Australia, with identical courses and staff for internal and external students. It was in response to increased demand for university education, and for better qualifications. The Department of Correspondence Studies was set up for adults who have ability, but who missed educational chances in the past and cannot attend full-time or part-time university education for various reasons. Other intentions were to:

- enable people in mid-career, especially teachers, to upgrade their qualifications
- assist in the decentralisation of higher education
- help to overcome scarcity of places for full-time students
- decrease pressure on scarce suitable accommodation in Lusaka.

Entry Fees

Originally there were no tuition and boarding fees and students were supported by the government. Students are now charged fees, but these are not full cost-recovery.

Courses

There are two main distance education degree programmes developed to meet national societal development goals :

- BA - School of Humanities and Social Sciences
- BA with Education - School of Education.

The number of courses offered at a distance has been reduced over the years. Extramural courses are restricted largely to arts and commerce, and there is a perceived need to develop distance education in science and mathematics.

It has been possible to complete an entire degree by correspondence, and 140 students have done so over the years. However, because of practical requirements in some courses, especially in teaching methods courses, students usually transfer to full-time on campus study for the final two years. Currently only first and second year courses are offered by correspondence, though this is a temporary measure. Some of the full-time students and who have one or two courses to go to graduate may complete their degrees by correspondence.

Correspondence courses are predominantly printed materials, which are replicated using typewriters and duplicating machines. There is a three week residential school which students pay to attend. Correspondence students may be given and do less work than full-time students and distance students have to pass certain core courses before they can study full-time on campus. The counselling service for distance education students has improved, and increased student success rate is linked to this.

Students

Student numbers have increased steadily in the last 20 years.

1967	152
1983	600
1989	731

Regulations require correspondence students to be 21% of full-time students. An average of 230 distance education students each year are enrolled, and 4000 have enrolled since 1967. Two-thirds of these have been in education, increasing the output of teachers and leading to improved quality and quantity of education services. Students are reported to be well-motivated, and tend to be:

- adults with work or family commitments
- wishing to gain qualifications
- wishing to update qualifications
- located in rural areas, but 30% are in Lusaka
- students who failed to progress as full-time students.

The number of students per lecturer varies according to programme, level and school. The policy is that each lecturer has 50 off-campus students, but the number may be up to 150 currently. The average pass rate for distance education students is reportedly more than 87%. Though the dropout rate of correspondence students has been as high as 30% in the past it is now 10-15%

The Department of Correspondence Studies has been a significant factor in the overall increase in the numbers enrolled with the university and of those graduating each year.

Problems mentioned by staff:

- Dominance of face-to-face education. Despite the significant proportion of distance education students, the New England model means that lecturers see face-to-face teaching as their main responsibility.
- The apparently low status of the Department of Correspondence Studies in the university.
- Some departments do not wish to offer courses by correspondence because of the heavy workload involved.
- In the past there has been a high dropout rate among distance students, but this is improving.
- The postal system is not as well developed as in industrial nations. The mail is slow, students receive material late, and feedback between tutor and student is infrequent.
- Student frustration sometimes leads to discontinuation of studies.
- Most lecturers are not trained in distance education and correspondence teaching methods nor do they have experience of adult teaching.

- Lecturers at the University of Zambia are overworked, and have little time for preparation of materials and marking assignments.
- Pass rates have been low in the past but are improving and part-time correspondence pass rates compare well with full-time rates.
- Correspondence programmes are not adequately evaluated for effectiveness.
- Printing facilities are inadequate. They are slow and costly, limited by finance and paper supplies.
- Lack of effective student support because of communication difficulties, lack of and cost of telephones.
- Radio broadcasts were discontinued four years ago. They were in force from 1982-1986 but had limited effectiveness because of problems with liaison, publicity and timing, and because few students had radio receivers.
- Small course numbers means costly course production, printing, storage and distribution.

THE EDUCATION BROADCASTING SERVICES OF ZAMBIA

The Education Broadcasting Services were set up in the early 1960s to ensure that schools were provided with lessons through radio, audio visual aids and television.as there was an acute lack of trained primary and secondary school teachers. There still is a serious shortage of secondary school teachers, because of the growing population and increasing secondary rolls.

Educational Radio Service

The Educational Radio Service transmits programmes intended for primary schools, secondary schools, teacher-training colleges and to the students of the National Correspondence College and Adult Continuing Education Centres. In 19 hours of broadcasting per week, the broadcasts mainly cater for primary schools in the mornings and open secondary classes in the afternoon. The broadcasts concentrate on the main academic subjects and are intended to enrich and be supplementary to classwork. There are two radio recording studios. Producers consult with various education specialists from Curriculum Development Centre, Inspectors, the National Correspondence College and the University of Zambia. Well-planned and presented printed teachers' guides support the radio lessons but there are no student workbooks. Programmes run for three years unless there is a change of syllabus.

Educational broadcast support materials are now available in almost all schools and colleges according to the National Commission for Development Planning 1989.
The Audio Visual Aids Service dubs radio lessons on cassettes and lends these to schools, especially those that find it difficult to schedule radio broadcasts. It also sends educational films, wall charts and the like as well as distributing and repairing audio visual equipment in schools. There are workshops and mobile technicians to help maintain radios, tape recorders and other equipment.

It was reported that radio programmes and audio tapes are popular with students and teachers when they are able to hear them, because of the strongly oral culture and the group participation.

Educational Television

Although there had been some 324 telecasts annually, "television programmes were suspended due to lack of studio facilities" (NCDP 1989).

Other Distance Education

Despite determined efforts it did not prove possible in the short time available for meetings to be arranged with the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. However, I managed to read some of the literature and talked to people who were able to provide some information.

While the Ministry of Education is responsible for the Educational Broadcasting Services, a number of other ministries, departments and institutions utilise radio for educational purposes. Radio programmes are in English and some native languages. The aims of Radio Farm Forums organised by the Extension Branch of the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives are to use radio for educating small scale or subsistence farmers in modern agricultural methods and for taking mass education to places which agricultural extension workers cannot easily reach. Radio Farm Forums involve groups of people who listen to the broadcasts and then discuss them.
Each individual in the group is expected to implement on their own initiative what they learn from radio lessons. The number of forums has steadily increased from 437 in 1969 to 817 in 1986. These figures show the importance of radio as an educational medium and its

potential, given further development. The Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives also broadcasts short topical radio programmes aimed at the general public. Other ministries, departments and institutions produce various non-formal education radio broadcasts in areas such as adult literacy, health and political education, all of which are transmitted by the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation.

Problems of Educational Broadcasting

1 It was stated that only 40% of personnel are trained in educational broadcasting - by the British Council at the BBC and occasionally by Australia and the Netherlands. Workshops are needed within the country, particularly for training in distance education methodology to improve the quality of the printed teachers' guides. Attachment courses in the central southern African region were also suggested as necessary.

2 The national shortage of printed material "does not assist the effectiveness of the literacy programmes provided by the Department of Community Development" (Alexander 1975) ,and this is an area of major concern to the government. The shortage also hampers the production of support material for radio broadcasts.

3 However, the problems lie not so much in the quality of the broadcasts and support material, but in who is actually listening and consequently the effectiveness of the broadcasts. There is a shortage of radio receivers and a dependence on donor countries to supply them. The last issue of radio receivers to schools was reported to have been in 1979 and it is not known how many of those are now working. Provision of batteries for the radios is erratic and electric power is not available in many villages. It is not known whether schools are listening and if the broadcasts are making any impact. There needs to be a system of monitoring use of and assessing the outcomes of the broadcasts.

4 Because of lack of transport and money, producers are unable to go out to schools to see for themselves what is really wanted in the way of broadcasts. Evaluation cards are sent to teachers but not to students. Although research by Siaciwena in 1984 indicated that teachers who responded to the questions on the card used the broadcasts and saw some educational value in them, this data is now thought to be unreliable mainly because so few teachers responded.

5 There has been a progressive retrenchment in provision of educational broadcasts in recent years:

- The University of the Air ceased broadcasting lectures to students five years ago.
- It was reported that up to two years ago broadcasts were made directly to secondary schools, but now they mainly cater for the Open Secondary Classes of the National Correspondence College.
- Educational television programmes were previously broadcast in the Copperbelt, but have now ceased.

This creeping drawback and limitation in educational broadcasting has affected staff morale and a sense of disillusionment and powerlessness was apparent.

If some form of national body charged with responsibility of promoting development of distance education in Zambia can be established, its function could include integration and co-ordination of educational media to optimum effect. Given the strong oral tradition among Zambians, the geography and infrastructure of the country, the relatively cheap and speedy delivery of information that the radio medium can provide, it seems that educational radio broadcasting will continue to be important in distance education development. However, a more regular supply of basic equipment such as radios and batteries has to be arranged, the amount of support material has to be increased, the ways in which other media are to be integrated with radio broadcasts have to be carefully examined, and more training has to be made available.

Such national body could also look into the possibilities of rationalising and restructuring educational broadcasting, both the Educational Broadcasting Services and the less formal kind at present under the auspices of a wide range of separate bureaucracies, perhaps with a view to putting all of it under the umbrella of one of the education ministries or the broadcasting ministries. Such centralisation could well lead to a sharing of resources and programmes and a reduction in their duplication, and perhaps a reduction in the hours of educational broadcasting, thus freeing up funds for the purchase of radios and batteries in working order to distribute throughout the country so as to ensure that more people are listening to and benefiting from the broadcasts. Other monies saved might be invested in comprehensive monitoring and evaluation processes.

4 COMMUNICATIONS IN ZAMBIA

All people involved in correspondence education reported that the postal system is slow except in main cities, and is poor in remote villages. Power for radios, television and cassette tape recorders is limited to cities and main towns. Batteries are expensive and hard to obtain. Radio receivers are expensive, often need repairing, or lack batteries. Television programmes are transmitted to the main cities but there are similar problems with cost, availability and maintenance of receivers. The telephone system is reasonably modern, but few people can afford telephones. The Zambian telephone directory is smaller than that of an area of 30,000 population in New Zealand. Many numbers have been changed since the directory was printed. There are many crossed lines and charges are very high. Paper is in short supply and costly. I could find only one bookshop in Lusaka, and books are prohibitively expensive in relation to salaries and wages in Zambia. Newspapers are limited in size and costly. Second-hand copies are sought after. Sealed roads are few, some were built by aid and have not been well maintained since. Vehicles are in short supply, difficult to maintain and get parts for. Petrol is costly in relation to finance available in Zambia.

EVALUATION

1 **Zambian distance education agencies have shown considerable determination and dedication to provide the educational service expected from them.**

2 **The three agencies reviewed have each had, and increasingly have, considerable difficulties in meeting these expectations.** These difficulties appear to be mainly the result of insufficient quantity or quality of resources, staff or equipment. The problems seem to be becoming worse and more complex.

The Third and Fourth National Development plans suggest that there have been difficulties in achieving the objectives and a need to limit future plans because of difficulties in allocating sufficient resources to various parts of the education sector. There was not time or opportunity to investigate whether distance education is worse off in absolute terms, or has suffered more in increasing shortfall between what is provided and what is necessary, in relation to other educational programmes.

It is possible that some distance education activities, students and institutions in Zambia are losing out, in comparison with more conventional sectors,. There is only one National Correspondence College, and thousands of face-to-face schools, and the Department of Correspondence Studies at the University of Zambia is small, and apparently not strongly placed in the university administration. In such situations in other countries distance education has not done well in the competition for resources.

3 **All Zambian distance education agencies appear to have started off well and with considerable initial success. In varying degrees they still meet many of the expectations and demands made of them, despite resource difficulties.** The three agencies reviewed still have a clear perception of the role they can fill as distance education institutions. All could achieve much more, with more support, encouragement and help with some critical resources.

The scale of the task before them has become greater than the present organisations can meet and each has had to retrench to some extent. Some are now approaching a critical situation. Further deterioration or collapse of either the National Correspondence College or the Department of Correspondence Studies at University of Zambia could seriously affect both quality and quantity of educational provision and human resources development

in Zambia. The National Correspondence College appeared to be in greatest need of assistance, and as a separate institution is possibly the easiest to help.

4 **There is a clear perception that distance education can contribute significantly to development of education in Zambia.** For example, the University of Zambia Department of Correspondence Studies has status and in Dr Siaciwena, now acting director, has a man with considerable experience and knowledge of distance education. What is also needed is a person or group of persons with drive, initiative and access to political influence.

Distance education has specific advantages for Zambia human resources development.

- It is a cheaper system of education and can be cost effective.
- People learn while earning, which means cost saving for employers and students and maintenance of services and the economy while upgrading them.
- Adults can make immediate use of knowledge and skills gained and become more productive, both as individuals and for local benefit and nationally.
- It reaches a larger pool of students at little additional cost, and this pool can be extended with diminishing unit costs.
- Adult students with work or family commitments (or in rural areas) can get degrees after a shorter period of study than would otherwise possible.
- Quality teaching materials can be developed and widely used both for the present curriculum and to foster particular policies, such as basic technical, health and agriculture education.

If the distance education institutions have clear objectives, a defined and well understood role in the overall educational strategy, can work co-operatively and share their expertise, and have sufficient share of educational finance, they can be a very cost effective way of increasing both the quality and quantity of education in Zambia.

5 **Distance education should be encouraged in Zambia.** It is too much to expect that any educational or training programme based on face-to-face, conventional learning/teaching, would cater adequately for educational and training needs of working adults and unemployed youths in a situation such as exists in Zambia today. This encouragement should start by helping the present three institutions overcome their immediate problem, and to work co-operatively among themselves and with other government distance education activities.

6 **While the three agencies reviewed have established firmly the place of distance education in Zambia, they appear to some extent to be taken for granted now and the basic needs of an effective distance education system do not appear to be understood by planners and resource allocators.** Possibly because distance education can provide education relatively inexpensively, these agencies are now being expected to educate too many students with too few resources. What was possible previously is not now practical in the light of population increasing faster than available finance.

7 **The potential of distance education to contribute to the solution of many social, economic and educational problems has been recognised and picked up so enthusiastically that, understandably, efforts have become diffuse and resources spread too thinly.** The impact has been lessened and services cut back or run down so that circumstances are now critical in some distance education providers. Moving on too many fronts creates situations which are only marginally viable and so there are few flow-on effects. It may be better to target core problems such as the placement of students from primary to junior secondary school and from junior to senior secondary school and create a strong enough response for the effects to spread, eg better quality students emerging from secondary will in fact enhance the quality of teachers without the need for a specially developed funded programme to do this.

8 **The quality of distance education can be assured by quality control of courses written, adapted or imported, and in monitoring marking and delivery systems.** Distance education can also economically improve the quality of teaching by upgrading teachers' subject knowledge and teaching methods. Effective distance education is much more dependent on reliable administrative and management systems than conventional schools. But once good quality systems are in place both qualitative and quantitative monitoring are more easily achieved and the data collected can be generally more objective and reliable than for conventional institutions. In the time available it was not possible to investigate properly such systems and monitoring procedures. However, the Department of Correspondence Studies appeared to be in better health than the National Correspondence College or the Educational Broadcasting Service. In times of diminishing resources and sustained or increased levels of demand it is even more important to have effective systems and monitoring. Such procedures and the feedback available from them enable assessments to be made about the best and most efficient methods and use of limited resources.

9 **Distance education is a proven means of relatively inexpensive quantitative improvement.** The larger the numbers of students involved in distance education courses the lower the unit costs per student. Courses can be designed with a considerable self-mark immediate feedback component and less tutor marking, so that staff can deal with larger numbers of students. A small number of good experienced teachers from the conventional education system, specially trained as distance educators can have far more widespread impact on the total educational objectives than those same teachers can have in the face-to-face classroom or lecture theatre - a way of maximising the usefulness of experienced qualified staff. To persuade such teachers to move to distance education would probably require some kind of salary incentive.

10 **It is essential that there should be a specific national policy for distance education as a whole** rather than just for specific institutions and separately in each ministry as is the case at present.

11 **The thrust for co-operation or some degree of consolidation can be brought to bear on distance education.** Each of the three agencies and institutions I looked at was unique in Zambia, a small single enterprise among their recognised conventional counterparts. Staff can gain a sense of co-operation, support and recognition, by increasingly working together in combined distance education operations.

12 **The education system in general needs to maintain the extent and quality of primary education** which could be in danger of losing the impetus of the initial emphasis on universalising education immediately following independence. The main contributions distance education can make to providing universal primary education are:

- improving the standard of education of primary teachers, particularly in mathematics, science and elementary technical subjects
- improving the teaching ability of primary teachers.

The national development plans emphasise that if Zambia is to progress, economically, junior and senior secondary education also needs to be strengthened and related to economic development and technical manpower needs. Distance education has the potential to play a major role in achieving these goals.

13 **Some limited provision of additional facilities for distance education will be necessary to ensure regular and reliable production of educational materials.** Just as face-to-face education needs teachers and classrooms, distance education needs, paper, ink, printing machines, typewriters, delivery systems. There is a clear need for distance education to supplement and extend face-to-face education.

14 **After the frustrations of recent years it is to be expected that it may take some time to re-establish the effectiveness and credibility of distance education.** This is another reason for tackling limited definable objectives for distance education so that progress towards the objectives, and standards achieved by students, are clearly discernible in a short time.

Improving the quality and status of distance education would do away with the present requirement that degree/diploma students complete some on-campus papers, thus taking pressure off existing facilities,and staff in tertiary institutions.

Some Problems Perceived

1 **Immediate Practical Difficulties**

Difficulties facing the three agencies are listed earlier in the report.

- To operate at all, Zambian distance education agencies must be able to produce teaching materials..
- The National Correspondence College and the Department of Correspondence Studies must be able to prepare and print assignments and lessons.
- There must be able staff to devise teaching assignments, keyboards to produce masters, sufficient paper, inks and reliable printing presses.
- They must be able to distribute the teaching resources to students and recover them.
- The Educational Broadcasting Service must have staff, access to studios and broadcasting facilities, and students and schools must be able to receive educational programmes regularly.

Not all these requirements are being met and some of them only marginally.

2 **Maintenance and Standards**

- There is a clear need to set high but achievable standards for each distance education institution and agency, and a regular check of outcomes and use of resources to see that these standards are met and maintained.
- There appears to be a tendency to blame lack of resources, rather than to search for ways to sustain and make the best of resources that are available.

3 **Hands-out attitude**

There was general concern about the state of individual distance education agencies and the problems they each faced. It may have been implicit in the nature of this exercise, and the general need for aid programmes in Zambia, but there was repeated evidence of people in government and in distance education looking for someone to help them rather than attempting to find local solutions to greater efficiency.

4 **Political Influence, Government Initiative and Support**

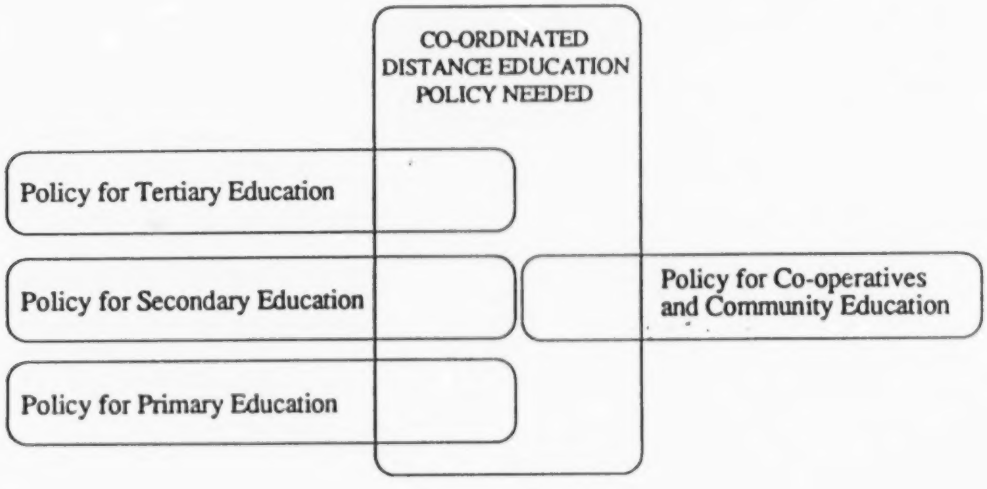
- There is a need for support and encouragement from government for distance education, for co-ordination and for individual institutions, which should result in lifting staff morale.
- Hardly anyone in power or authority is reported to know much about the practice of distance education or conditions necessary for efficiency and success.
- There is no coherent distance education policy in the Fourth National Development Plan - only references to individual institutions or activities.
- Awareness of the significant present and potential role of distance education in educational outputs and human resource development is not apparent in the Fourth National Development Plan nor was it manifest in discussions with most prominent officials.

5 **Bureaucratic**

- There was evidence of narrow tunnel vision of each Ministry concentrating exclusively on its own responsibilities in difficult times.
- There appeared to be clearly defined limits to each government department's responsibilities and activities In times of funding shortages and pressure to perform under difficulties these limits may sometimes become artificial barriers between the two education ministries.

- Possible desire of Ministry of Higher Education to focus efforts of reorganisation and external assistance in distance education on institutions and activities for which they are responsible. The Ministry of General Education Youth and Sport and its distance education agencies may be pre-empted, kept at a distance, or not receive an equitable share of attention and resources.
- Apparent lack of enthusiasm to involve other Ministries in co-operative distance education now or in the future.
- Lack of appreciation of the desirability and efficiency of using distance education to supplement conventional face-to-face education.

NEED FOR CO-ORDINATED EXPLICIT DISTANCE EDUCATION POLICY



6 **Lack of Co-ordination and Mutual Support**

There is a lack of co-ordination between the distance education agencies. Each, while significant, is only a single operation in the context of face-to-face schools, university and broadcasting institutions.

The Department of Correspondence Studies of the University of Zambia relates through the university administration to the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. Although the Educational Broadcasting Service and the National Correspondence College are both part of the Ministry of General Education, Youth and Sport, the former is in Lusaka where the Ministry's head office is located , but the College is at Luanshya some distance away. This makes effective communication and efficient co-operation difficult.

It proved not possible in the short time available in Lusaka to meet with people involved in distance education in the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives and the people I spoke to in the Ministries of Education did not appear to be able to provide much information about their activities. Some information was obtainable from articles and the National Development Plans.

There needs to be closer and more frequent contact between the three institutions visited and with the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives. This could result in co-ordinated programmes in health, hygiene, nutrition, agriculture, basic technology, literacy and numeracy between schools and community, sharing of resources and personnel. Printing problems may be able to be overcome by shared facilities. Selected quality distance education resources provided for primary schools, community education, co-operatives and junior and senior secondary schools could be used in local face-to-face situations to improve and extend school and community education.

7 The Needs

1 **To improve, upgrade and make more reliable,** effective and efficient, what is done now by the three institutions so that present resources are better used.

2 **To co-ordinate** so that expertise is shared, mutual support provided and possible co-operative activities and economies of scale explored.

3 **To identify priority areas of need** in conjunction with face-to-face educators and administrators, manpower planners and the Fourth National Development Plan for:

- increasing or reducing present numbers of distance education students
- extending distance education courses to a higher level
- starting new distance education courses and services or curtailing ineffectual or inefficient services
- improving quality of courses, delivery, systems, interaction, and student support.

8 Assistance:

Any assistance provided by or through the Commonwealth of Learning should:

1 Have an observable effect in the short term

2 Involve a commitment to policy and clear comparable commitment of resources by Zambian government through the Ministries concerned with distance education. Self-help principle should apply in any assistance, ie the Zambian government and Ministries should be required to allocate sufficient priority, staff and finance to ensure commitment.

3 Be sustainable over a period of years. Nothing should be initiated which cannot be continued. This involves maintenance of equipment, supply of materials, availability of adequately trained staff and of resources for communication.

4 Encourage co-operation and co-ordination between Zambian distance education agencies, and between the government departments responsible for them,

- to facilitate the spread of knowledge and expertise among those involved in distance education
- to explore ways of improving effectiveness and efficiency, through use of staff
- to assist in the establishment of systems and monitoring
- to improve staff. morale.

SOME POSSIBLE WAYS TO ASSIST ZAMBIAN DISTANCE EDUCATION

1 **Assist individual institutions,** with little emphasis on formal co-ordination.

2 Assist the Zambian government of establish a **nationally integrated distance teaching infrastructure.**

3 Work from the status quo to help the government develop formal **co-ordination of distance teaching** agencies, which remain under their present Ministries.

Each of these possibilities has advantages and disadvantages, some of which are discussed below. They are not all mutually exclusive alternatives and it is possible to assist in a combination of ways.

1 Assist Individual Institutions Only

This does not seem worthwhile as each agency is too isolated and vulnerable. Co-ordination in some form is necessary to improve morale, knowledge, effectiveness and to make more efficient use of scarce resources. Co-ordination would also raise consciousness about distance education and help it to contribute more effectively to Zambian education and human resource development goals.

However assisting individual distance education institutions to some degree is necessary in the immediate future, simply to help them to overcome some present critical problems and avoid others that are threatening. Any such assistance would need to be consistent with an overview of resource needs of all distance education and of any planned future co-operation. It would not be prudent on the one hand to assist the National Correspondence School with typing and printing needs and on the other hand to help the Department of Correspondence Studies overcome similar problems with different and incompatible equipment, without fully exploring possibilities of shared resources or co-operation.

2 A Nationally Integrated Distance Teaching Infrastructure

a There is a problem of which Ministry such an integrated distance teaching infrastructure would come under, and of ensuring an objective balance of priorities and resources in the various agencies.

b There is at present a degree of disfunction with two Ministries of Education. If a nationally integrated distance education infrastructure is administered by the Ministry of Higher Education, it may mean that the National Correspondence

College and the Educational Broadcasting Service do not receive an equitable share of attention and funding. If a national distance education infrastructure was under the Ministry of General Education, Youth and Sport, the University of Zambia may find it hard to accept, and difficult in practice, that part of one of its departments was administered by another ministry. If the Department of Correspondence Studies was partially or completely separated from the university, questions of credibility, standards and comparability may arise. The Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives distance education activities appear to work from a different basis and methodology. It may be difficult to preserve any advantages of this if these activities were separated administratively from that Ministry.

c Distance teaching may become more isolated and outweighted and find it harder to get resources if it is separated administratively from comparable face-to-face teaching.

d Distance education should be seen as an important integral part of education, just a different mode of delivery which is cost effective and suitable in many circumstances. It can complement, supplement and support face-to-face education, but the possibility of developing such a relationship might be diminished if it was separately administered.

e Distance education should appear as an alternative to conventional education at each level and have the same administration, curriculum, assessment, and lead to same qualifications etc.

f Any nationally integrated distance teaching infrastructure must have credibility in the eyes of

- Government and Cabinet and consequently receive adequate funding for the tasks it is expected to undertake
- the officials who advise government and administer government policy and parastatals
- teachers, lecturers and community educators and workers both within and outside the proposed infrastructure.
- students at all levels
- employers who need to be convinced of the equivalence of standards of qualifications and teaching

g There would be advantages in identifying distance education and heightening its profile. However, the practical and administrative difficulties of setting up a nationally integrated distance teaching infrastructure and establishing it in the eyes of the educational establishment and of the community would absorb initial energy and impetus. This first step of disengaging distance education agencies from their present administrative and bureaucratic structures could be costly and time

consuming. It may be difficult to ensure that the finances and resources associated with each agency are also transferred to a new infrastructure. Such a move could also delay the expected educational benefits that should result from such a carefully conceived, planned and soundly created infrastructure. Many of the benefits may be able to be achieved more quickly, easily and with less disruption by encouraging co-ordination and establishing a formal body to plan, implement and foster co-ordination between existing distance education providers and with Government..

3 Co-ordination of Distance Teaching Agencies

A co-ordinating body could be developed from the basis of existing distance education institutions and agencies. If it is established formally as part of government provision in education and human resource development, a co-ordinating body will have status, visibility, resources, objectives and targets arranged in priorities, a timetable and a reporting procedure. There will be difficulties possibly in relation to personnel, funding and communication, but such problems should be fewer and less serious than in either of the other two possibilities considered above, while the ease of implementation, quickness of achieving gains, and benefits to distance education institutions and government human resources development will be greater in the medium term.

Recommendation

A co-ordinating body should be set up to:

- help develop national distance education policy in conjunction with the two Ministries of Education, the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives, and any other government body involved in distance education
- clarify or delineate areas of responsibility, levels, target students, set priorities
- encourage liaison and effective co-operation between groups
- lift the profile of distance education to get more resources and support from central government
- establish common training in distance education and curriculum development
- encourage mutually useful research in outcomes and standards, and in efficient use of resources
- liaise with the regional Distance Education Association and international distance education agencies
- encourage common use of resources, eg in printing, resource production, student support
- improve communication between distance education agencies and with the Directorate Manpower & Development

- liaise with libraries, and other resources or delivery agencies, press for favourable rates and facilities for postal, telephone and other communication technologies
- encourage multiple and more efficient use of local or regional facilities and staff.

Resources

For any co-ordinating body to have a chance of success it is essential that it be set up with sufficient resources. These should include:

a a liaison person highly placed in one of the Ministries. A major part of his/her salary should come from the Zambian government. A possible area in which such a person could be located might be manpower planning with access to the Cabinet Office.

b money for administration and communication. This includes access to secretarial and administrative services, and funding for telephone, travel and fax facilities, which are essential if the co-ordinating body is to co-ordinate its own activities so that it can function effectively co-ordinating distance education.

Funding

Funding to establish and maintain such a body should be shared by the Zambian government, other Zambian groups and external agencies. It is recognised that government finance is much sought after in Zambia, and is a diminishing resource in a climate of increasing demand. However, it should be possible to show that the anticipated benefits from such a co-ordinating body in more effective use of resources, lower educational costs per head, earlier and greater achievement of educational, community and economic goals, and greater efficiency, are sufficiently greater than the cost to the government to warrant the government allocating resources to establishing and maintaining the co-ordinating body.

It is essential that the initial proposal be well planned, has the support of influential people, can be clearly presented, is shown to be practicable, objectives and timeframe are specified, and that the expected outcomes are specified and both direct and indirect financial benefits stated.

Zambian government and officials will have a better idea of where such funds may come from, but possible sources are:

a government funds , which may come from within the education departments, but should not be taken from the government budgets of the distance education agencies.

b government departments to be served by the co-ordinating body may be asked and be able to contribute, eg agriculture fisheries and forestry, environment protection and conservation, manufacturing, trade, energy, transportation and communication, health, mass communications, and social and cultural agencies.

c The private sector, eg banks, the equivalent of chambers of commerce or employers federations, may also see economic benefits for themselves, particularly with school level commercial, technical, practical and transition to work courses.

d Agricultural interests may also be persuaded that they will benefit if they contribute.

Careful investigation and calculation of costs and projected benefits such as that suggested above can best be done co-operatively with Zambian officials. It was not even possible to start on such an exercise in the short time of the present consultancy. However, providing such a cost benefit analysis may encourage other international financial and aid agencies to contribute.

External aid agencies such as the Commonwealth of Learning, UNESCO, the International Council for Distance Education, should be asked to contribute and participate. Other external aid may come from national distance education agencies such as the Australian and South Pacific External Studies Association (ASPESA) or the Distance Education Association of New Zealand (DEANZ), or European or North American counterparts. The British Council may participate by organising seminars or study tours or providing distance education resources.

Future Developments

While the first task of the proposed co-ordinating body would be to improve the effectiveness and resource utilisation of Zambian distance education agencies individually and collectively, it should also foster expansion into priority areas in education and human resources development. Such possible developments could include:

- Expansion of distance education into commercial, technical, home science, agricultural and horticultural fields
- Closer links between established distance education institutions and co-operatives

a nd community education extending the University of Zambia courses to Bachelor of Education to include courses in science and mathematics

- On the job teacher training, to improve the knowledge and teaching ability of teachers in schools.
- Focus on printed resources to improve provision and quality and lower cost.
- Multiple use and sharing of student support facilities.

Possible Infrastructures for a Co-ordinating Body

The proposed co-ordinating body could be a designated part of one of the two ministries of education..

1 **A specific section in one Ministry** to co-ordinate all distance education.
As indicated above, problems of the present organisation are:

- There are two education ministries with separate responsibilities, staff, funding, etc.
- Distance education is carried out by other ministries, eg co-operatives and agriculture, apparently unrelated to the activities for which the two education ministries are responsible.
- For an effective co-ordinating body to be developed, each ministry will have to be convinced that the distance education for which it is responsible will get a fair deal and will be able to be influenced by the particular ministry's objectives and priorities.

2 **A body comprising a designated Senior Officer in each ministry** that administers some distance education. Each of these officers who is designated responsibility for administering and fostering distance education in the particular ministry would liaise with officials in other ministries in co-operative distance education practices.

The present structure means that distance education is disadvantaged by concerns and needs of face-to-face education which administrators are responsible for, and which are also struggling with diminished resources in the face of increasing demand. This proposed body would have a single voice with potentially greater influence with their ministries than each individual agency has. If it was able to subjugate particular interests to overall development of distance education it could be effective.

Advantages

a It would lift the image and importance of distance education .

b May mean that distance education gets more, or a fair share of resources.

c Co-ordinated policy could be developed and implemented.

d Resources could be used more efficiently.

Problems with such an arrangement could be:

a **Administration of distance education could still be fragmented in practice.**

b **The degree and effectiveness of co-operation depends on individual officers in ministries.**

c **The suggested co-ordinating body does not involve the providers and practitioners and policies may become divorced from practices and local realities.**

d **The co-ordinating body would have to report to ,and work with, several ministers and ministries.**

3 **A Liaison Group of Providers,** eg ZADE, the Zambian Association of Distance Education with others involved in providing distance education, who may not be affiliates of the association at present.

Advantages

Such a co-ordinating body would enable members to:

a help each other to share expertise and knowledge

b benefit from each others experience

c co-operate in staff training

d lessen the sense of isolation of each institution and improve the morale of staff.

Problems

Such a liaison group would have little influence in the ministries and with the allocators of finance and probably would be seen simply as a pressure group. It would be unlikely to be able to achieve the purposes outlined above for which a distance education co-ordinating body is recommended.

4 **A Comprehensive Co-ordinating Committee Comprising Ministry and Providers**

Such a co-ordinating committee would include:

a a senior officer from each ministry with responsibility for a distance education institution or activity

b representatives from each of the providing distance education agencies administered by the various ministries

c manpower planning.and human resource development sections of government. There should be a formal link with a senior official with access to permanent secretary and/or Cabinet.

Advantages

Such a structure would, in addition to the advantages listed above for 2 (a co-ordinated ministry body):

a give distance education more direct access to policy makers and budget decision-makers.

b ensure more frequent and formal links between ministries and providing institutions.

c link distance education clearly with human resource development and manpower planning.

d provide an overview and more comprehensive, co-ordinated planning.

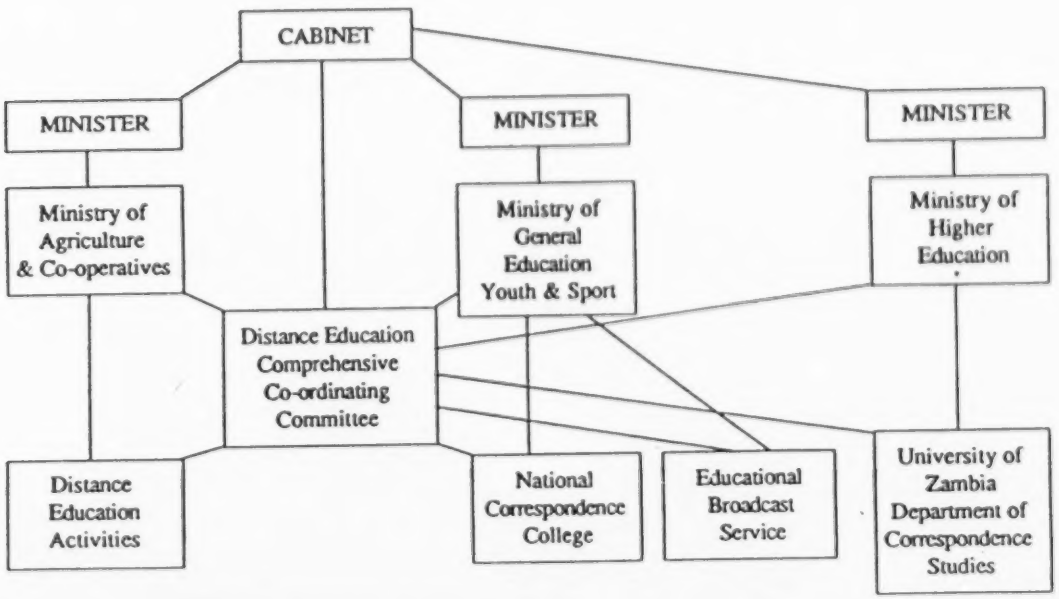
e have the potential to more effectively link distance education and face to face education.

f monitor outcomes against inputs across a wide front.

Problems

There would still be problems of fragmented administration of distance education in practice and much would depend on the goodwill and commitment of individual members.

The comprehensive co-ordinating committee would have to work closely and harmoniously with a number of people and institutions. It would have to work with at least three ministries and with a cabinet committee or officer. The links could be similar to those shown in the diagram.



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This proposal has some similarities to the establishment of a national body charged with the responsibility of promoting the development of distance education in Zambia. advocated by Dr Siaciwena.

POSSIBLE PROGRAMME

Adviser/Facilitator: The Commonwealth of Learning

1 Second a good distance education administrator as adviser/facilitator to Zambia for three to four months to discuss the proposals in this report with the Zambian Government, and to work out practical details..

2 The Commonwealth of Learning allocate approximately $US10,000 to the adviser/facilitator to buy essential immediate requirements

- a to help the National Correspondence College, the University of Zambia Department of Correspondence Studies and the Educational Broadcasting Services in their present difficulties indicated earlier in this report
- b to show the Commonwealth of Learning is having some practical effect improving distance education in Zambia.
- c to provide similar short term assistance to other distance education that may need it.

3 The adviser/facilitator works with Government, ministries and heads of agencies to work out ways and means of establishing an effective comprehensive co-ordinating committee for distance education in Zambia.

4 The adviser/facilitator works with Zambian administrators and helps in setting up a distance education co-ordinating committee. He/she then works with the committee and government as the committee establishes methods of proceeding, reporting, consulting, and obtaining and accounting for resources.

5 Commonwealth of Learning provides some money to fund the co-ordinating committee and the Zambian government finds the rest. Future Commonwealth of Learning assistance should depend on contributions from the Zambian government and progress in establishing effective co-ordination, and in observable outcomes. Other sources of finance and resources should be explored.

Immediate Assistance

6 The first priority for immediate short term assistance appears to me to be the National Correspondence College because of its size, present critical situation, the number of students it educates and the important part it plays in coping with 'squeeze outs', thus ameliorating social and political problems of large numbers of unemployed and uneducated teenagers.

The National Correspondence College also has the potential to play an important role in spreading technical and scientific knowledge. The college could develop and extend the teaching of practical skills in conjunction with co-operatives at lower levels than in polytechnics, and as a preliminary to courses at polytechnics. Some western countries use technical high schools with technical courses in applied subjects, such as clothing, home economics, accounting, bookkeeping, typing, keyboarding, technical drawing, woodwork, agriculture and horticulture. It may be possible and economical to import basic technical and vocational courses from overseas correspondence schools and adapt them to Zambian conditions.

The Fourth National Development Plan calls for relatively large numbers of people with fairly basic technological education to help achieve some of the economic, health, agricultural and societal goals. Basic school level technical education is a necessary prerequisite to tertiary level technical education. There is an urgent need to provide open secondary class students with copies of lessons and with teacher/supervisors.

7 There is also an urgent need to assist the Educational Broadcasting Service to become more closely integrated and to have some idea of its effectiveness. The co-ordinating committee and adviser/facilitator would be able to assess the need for, and cost of operational radio receivers and the use made of them.

8 The University of Zambia Department of Correspondence Studies also obviously needs help with staffing, printing and the other problems listed previously.

Further Action

9 The suggested comprehensive co-ordinating committee for distance education and the adviser/facilitator would be able to :

a Identify and establish medium term priorities for actioning problems.

b Persist with measures that have been taken to make correspondence teaching more effective, to maintain systems and processes and monitor them to establish warning signs and troubleshooting procedures.

c Investigate innovative and cost effective methods and processes.

d Investigate co-ordinating production of print materials on a single site to establish whether it would be economic, practical, would overcome present problems and be able to be maintained.

e Co-operate with other distance education institutions in South Africa and elsewhere. Members may be able to visit and liaise with other distance education centres to identify methods and techniques that would be suitable for Zambian conditions and help to improve the efficiency of distance education. It may be possible to develop training programmes and fellowships with the assistance of suitable distance education institutions and associations.

f Organise research, evaluate and develop monitoring and feedback systems that help maintain effectiveness.

GENERAL

1 The Consultancy

1 The time of two weeks for the consultancy was a very short time in which to examine distance education in Zambia in detail, and in particular its relationship with conventional face-to-face education.

2 Consequently there is reliance on comments, reports and personal observations, albiet these comments were made by administrators and providers of distance education. The only students spoken to were in secondary open study groups. A considerable amount of research and reading formed a useful background for both the consultancy and this report. Ideally I would have wished to visit each distance education institution, observe it in action, look at course planning, development and production activities, at teaching, at resource management and despatch and at student support, talk to staff, and see some of the materials, student scripts, and look at monitoring systems. It would also be desirable to talk with students' parents and those who employ students and are aware of the standard of education.

3 Distance education is almost invariably in the melieu of face-to-face education, and is judged in relationship to it. It would have been useful to have explored more fully the relationship of conventional and distance education at each level. Open

secondary school groups involve a mixture of delivery of methods and it may be that as well as seeking ways of improving the effectiveness of distance education in Zambia, it would be desirable to explore ways in which distance education can support and supplement face-to-face education. It is likely that this would result in greater efficiency and more effective use of resources as well as extending the scope and coverage of Zambian education and human resources development..

4 Because of the shortness of time and consequent limitation on comprehensiveness and thoroughness of the consultancy in Zambia, this report offers suggestions and generally indicates alternatives rather than making dogmatic recommendations. The one exception is the central concern of this report viz: **devising an effective means of co-ordinating Zambian distance education to obtain optimal educational benefit for the maximum number of students from the resources that can be obtained.**

For this to be possible a good knowledge of the mechanisms and complexities of government policy making, resource allocation and administration is absolutely essential. It was not possible for a foreigner to gain such knowledge and understanding in the time available. It appears best to establish general agreement between the Commonwealth of Learning and the Government of Zambia on principles and the main theme of this report and then to co-operatively endeavour to establish an effective comprehensive co-ordinating committee for distance education along the lines suggested.

Thanks

Appreciative thanks are expressed to all the people of Zambia who helped me and with whom I was able to discuss distance education in Zambia as it is now, should be and might one day be.

Apologies

Finally, please accept my apologies that ill-health and an unfortunate accident have delayed this report.

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